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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000682

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SUBJECT: ANSF AMMUNITION STOCKPILE MANAGEMENT NEEDS OVERHAUL

Classified By: POLITICAL-MILITARY COUNSELOR CAROL RODLEY FOR REASONS 1.
4 (A), (B), AND (D).

¶1. (C/REL ISAF) SUMMARY: During a recent meeting of the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) Ammunition Working Group, Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) urged the MOD to destroy its stockpiles of unserviceable ammunition. The buildup of unserviceable ammunition in MOD depots and U.S. operates Forward Supply Depots (FSD) poses a threat to the safety of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) personnel and U.S. ammunition handlers, in terms of both accident potential during storage/shipment and misfires during operations. It also poses a growing logistical problem because of the dwindling amount of adequate storage for newly purchased and donated ammunition. In one instance, Afghan National Army (ANA) officers reportedly prevented HALO Trust, a State Department funded international humanitarian demining and weapons abatement NGO from destroying some unserviceable ammunition that was slated for ANSF in Kandahar preparing for offensive operations. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C/REL ISAF) During a meeting of the Ammunition Working Group (AWG), at the MOD, CSTC-A raised serious objections about MOD's stockpiling of unserviceable ammunition at storage sites around the country. CSTC-A reported that Afghan National Army (ANA) ammunition officers do not always properly separate serviceable and unserviceable ammunition at the depots. CSTC-A cited a specific incident in which U.S. Forces at Camp Phoenix recently requested some ammunition from the ANA Khairabad depot for Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) deployed in Kandahar. Upon inspection at Camp Phoenix, U.S. military personnel determined that more than fifty percent of the ammunition was unserviceable.

¶3. (C/REL ISAF) CTSC-A representative requested that MOD staff and members of the AWG urge Deputy Minister Jawhiri to issue orders for unserviceable munitions at ANA depots to be destroyed to ensure adequate space will be available for current serviceable ammunition and the anticipated arrival of new ammunition. (Note: Dyncorp International contractors involved in weapons abatement work, as well as CSTC-A logistical experts, report that the storage management problem at the Khairabad depot is so bad that some serviceable ammunition is being stored in open fields, because of the lack of space in the facility. In such cases, the ammunition typically is stored in tents guarded by ANA personnel. End Note.)

ANA PREVENTS HALO TRUST FROM DESTROYING BAD AMMO

14. (SBU) The GOA deems, all ammunition recovered from caches and unexploded ordinance discovered in the field to be GOA property, which is true per signed decrees. Ammunition classified as serviceable normally is transported to the various MOD depots by the UN sponsored Afghanistan New Beginnings Program (ANBP). Unserviceable ammunition is supposed to be taken by HALO Trust, a State Department-funded international humanitarian demining and weapons abatement NGO, to central demolition sites and destroyed. (Note: HALO Trust has two temporary storage facilities - one in Kunduz and one near Bagram. End Note.)

15. (SBU) HALO Trust representatives cited two incidents in the past year in which low-ranking ANA officers had threatened HALO personnel for attempting to destroy unserviceable ammunition. The first incident occurred at the main ANA ammunition facility in Khairabad when an ANA Lieutenant drew a pistol on a HALO Trust Afghan supervisor attempting to remove unserviceable ammunition from the depot. The second more serious incident occurred at the facility in Mazar-E-Sharif, where two ANA officers reportedly beat a HALO Trust Afghan technical supervisor for trying to remove unserviceable ammunition from an ANA vehicle. (Note: HALO Trust representatives believe that this ammunition subsequently was sent to Khairabad, from which it later was distributed to ANA personnel in the South. End Note.)

16. (SBU) Dyncorp International, also working for State Department on a weapons and ammunition disposal contract, contacted polmiloff February 5 and said that one of their

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Afghan ammunition supervisors in Herat received a cell phone call from an individual claiming to be a member of the ANA. The caller threatened to kill the Dyncorp supervisor and kidnap his son for destroying Afghan ammunition. (Note: The local Dyncorp office has reported the incident to Afghan authorities, and Dyncorp has provided extra security for the individual who received the threat. End Note.)

NATO SENDS DELEGATION TO REVIEW ANSF AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT AND CONSIDER ASSISTANCE OPTIONS

17. (SBU) A NATO delegation visited Afghanistan February 5-9 and inspected the MOD Khairabad depot as well as other weapons abatement projects in the Kabul region. Per CSTC-A, the delegation will issue a report recommending that NATO assist the ANSF on the following projects: removing spilled fuel from SCUD missiles in the Panjshir (Note: According to the delegation, NATO has the capability to send an experienced team to perform an environmental cleanup of the contaminated area. End Note.), delivering improved lighting and other surveillance equipment to improve security at the Khairabad depot, and performing renovation to the flooring of MOD ammo bunkers at Khairabad to support addition of storage pallets.

18. (SBU) Post understands that a second NATO delegation will visit Afghanistan soon to assess the level of cooperation between the GoA and implementing partners (ANBP, HALO Trust, and Dyncorp Weapons Removal and Abatement teams) with a view to identifying further areas for NATO assistance with ANA weapons/ammunition stockpile management.

COMMENT

19. (C/REL ISAF) Post shares CSTC-A's concern over what appears to be MOD policy - or at least practice -- of stockpiling large quantities of unserviceable ammunition, as well as mixing unserviceable with serviceable ammunition. Beyond simple mismanagement, one explanation for this problem may be the "hoarding" mentality that has arisen in Afghanistan, after decades of war. Weapons caches strewn

around the country have long been viewed as a security blanket. A more cynical explanation would be that some ANA personnel may be trafficking in faulty ammunition, though post has not seen evidence of this. These possible explanations are not mutually exclusive.

¶10. (C/REL ISAF) Whatever the motivation, this practice poses a threat to the safety of ANSF personnel and U.S. ammunition handlers, in terms of accident potential during storage/shipment, but also to ANSF personnel who receive this faulty equipment. Additionally, space at the MOD's current facilities is becoming more scarce. This presents a significant logistical problem for the ANSF in operations against the Taliban. Additionally, the ANSF could face serious morale problems which could undermine faith in Afghan commanders if soldiers are harmed while using faulty ammunition. This is the last thing the ANSF needs while preparing for offensive operations against the Taliban. The reports of ANA officers allegedly abusing NGO technical supervisors involved in the removal of unserviceable ammunition are of particular concern. (Note: HALO Trust management reported the incidents to senior MOD officials and the ANA officers were reprimanded. HALO Trust told PolmilOff that the two incidents were isolated and this type of behavior from ANA is not the norm. Still, HALO Trust maintains that ANA officers involved with stockpile management will not agree to destroy ammunition without orders from their superiors. End Note.)

¶11. (SBU) The Ammo Working Group has sent a letter by all the members including the Afghan chair, General Hotak, to Deputy Minister of Defense for Logistics, Armaments, and Procurement Baz Mohammad Jawhari urging him to issue guidance to ANA personnel on ammunition management and better cooperation with NGOs involved in the destruction orders of unserviceable ammunition. Post will closely monitor this issue and coordinate with CSTC-A to take further action if needed. END COMMENT
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